Appendix - Marked up Claim Amendments
U.S. National Stage of PCT/EP00/07736
Additions are underlined and deletions are bracketed.

1. (Amended) A method for removing non-loaded amino groups which form part of the silanating agent used to activate a metal oxide surface during the preparation of metal oxide supports loaded with biomolecules, comprising the steps of:

(a) activating the surface of the support by means of a silanating agent comprising an amine group;

(b) loading the support by attaching biomolecules to the activated surface; and

(c) treating said [characterized in that subsequently the]loaded support [is treated]with an acidic solution[and provided that the method is not used for the preparation of silica wafers which are aminated by silanation using (3-aminopropyl)monoethoxydimethylsilane and loaded with oligonucleotides].

2. (Amended) A method for removing non-loaded amino groups which form part of the silanating agent used to activate a metal oxide surface during the preparation of metal oxide supports loaded with biomolecules, comprising the steps of:

(a) activating the surface of the support by means of a silanating agent comprising an amine group;

(b) loading the support by attaching biomolecules to the activated surface[,]; and

(c) treating said [characterized in that subsequently the]loaded support [is treated]with a basic or neutral solution[and provided that the method is not used for derivatization of alunimiumoxide nanoparticles aminated with (3-aminopropyl)triethoxysilane, wherein the basic solution further contains a large excess of N-acetylhomocysteinelactone].

3. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1[or 2], wherein the solution is of pH 2 to 6[7].

16. (Amended) [Use of the]The metal oxide support of claim 14[or 15], suitable for performing a probe-based assay.

17. (Amended) A kit [of parts]comprising the metal oxide support of claim 14[or 15], further comprising a detection means for determining whether binding has occurred between the biomolecules and an analyte.